

Old Post Historic District

Every Building Tells a Story



Old Post Historic District

The Old Post Historic District is in the main cantonment/post area of Fort Bragg. The historic district represents three periods of Fort Bragg's history:

1. the early construction of Camp Bragg in 1918;
2. the development of Fort Bragg as a permanent post in the late 1920s to the 1930s;
3. and the construction of permanent buildings to support World War II.

Fort Bragg's history did not stop after World War II, and there are several buildings in the historic district that were constructed after 1946, but they do not contribute to the district.

History of Fort Bragg & the Main Post Area



Camp Bragg, 1918



Fort Bragg, 1940s

Courtesy of XVIII ABN Corps Historian



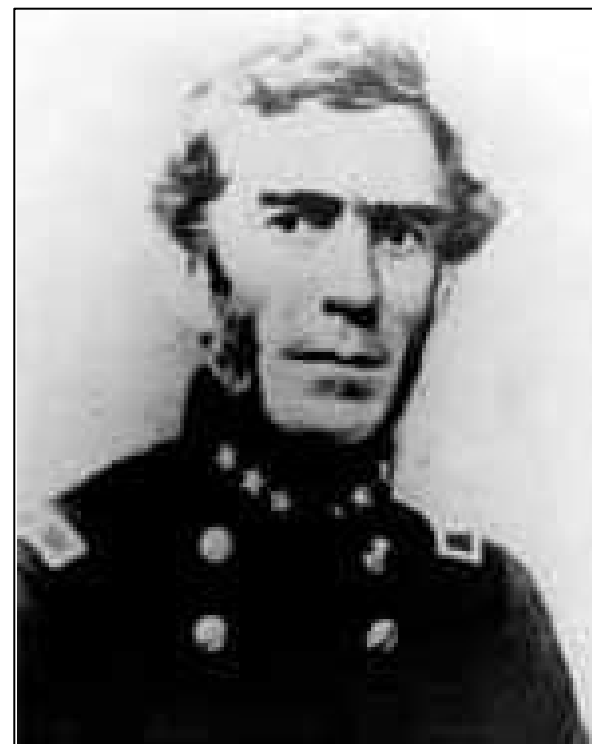
Fort Bragg, 1930s

The Beginnings

1918-1922

On August 21, 1918, the War Department established Camp Bragg as a field artillery training center in response to the need for specialized training bases as the United States fought in World War I.

Camp Bragg was named in honor of North Carolina native, Captain Braxton Bragg, who rendered artillery signal service at the Battle of Buena Vista, Mexico.



Captain Braxton Bragg
Courtesy of XVIII ABN Corps
Historian

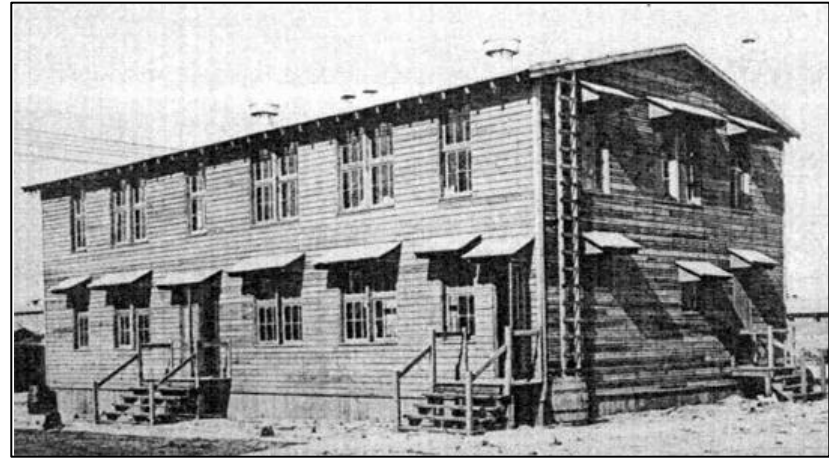
Field Artillery Training Center

Construction

Construction of Camp Bragg began a month later and by spring 1919 the base was ready to be occupied. The main cantonment area stood in what is now the Old Post Historic District (OPHD).



1918 Commanding General's House



1918 Barrack

The area consisted of wood-frame barracks, latrines, mess halls, administrative buildings, stables, and other buildings that would support 101 officers and 977 enlisted soldiers. In addition to the wood-frame buildings, there was a brick hospital and water treatment plant.

1918 Buildings

Still in existence today

The only five buildings from the 1918 construction that exist today are the water treatment plant complex (4 buildings) and a temporary wood-frame gymnasium. The gymnasium is the oldest building within the OPHD located on Reilly Road.



1918 Gymnasium as it looks today



Water Treatment Plant Complex as it looks today

Camp Bragg

Occupation

In spring 1919, Camp Bragg was ready for occupation, but by this time, World War I was over, the Army realized that Camp Bragg was valuable as it was the only place large enough for training in the use of new artillery weapons.

There was little activity at Camp Bragg until 1921 when the War Department ordered the closure of the base. Through the efforts of post commander, Brigadier General Albert J. Bowley, the War Department changed their minds and made Camp Bragg a permanent Army post in 1922.

Camp Bragg was renamed Fort Bragg. It continued to operate as a field artillery training center, as General Bowley noted, no other post had such good artillery training conditions.

Development of a Permanent Post

1927 - 1940

In 1926 Congress enacted Public Law 45 authorizing the Secretary of War to sell all or part of a number of military installations and use the money to build permanent housing and hospitals at permanent posts. Fort Bragg was one of the first recipients of the money, thus began an era of new construction at Fort Bragg.



*Aerial of Fort Bragg ca. 1929
Reilly Road is the central street.*

Main Post Area

The Design

The Quartermaster Corps were responsible for the construction, and they decided to make Fort Bragg a self-contained community. Major General B. Frank Cheatham, Quartermaster Corps Commander, assembled a team of distinguished engineers, landscape designers, and city planners.

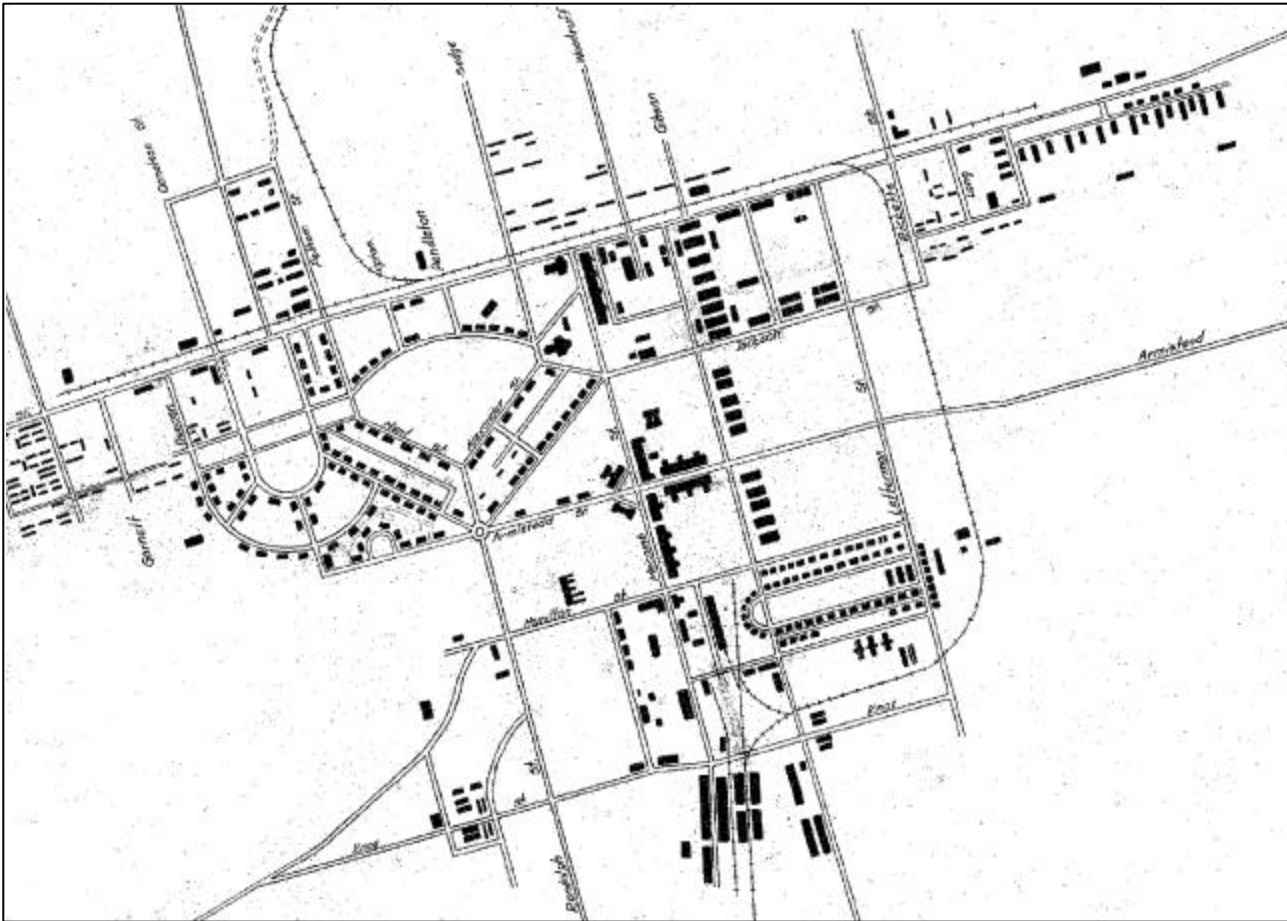
They utilized the 1919 linear layout and Beaux-Arts principles of landscape and urban design to create a unified and utilitarian design that blended well with the natural setting.



XVIII Airborne Corps Headquarters (Old Hospital) at the corner of Armistead and Macomb Streets.

Main Post Area

The Layout



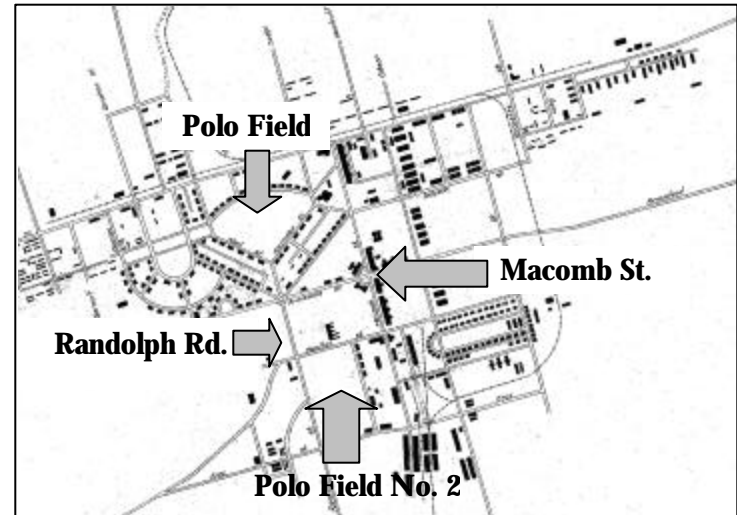
The overall layout of Fort Bragg consisted of grand streets with vistas of monumental buildings and open green spaces in an orderly plan with a clear division of activities. This layout is retained today.

Main Post Area

The Layout continued

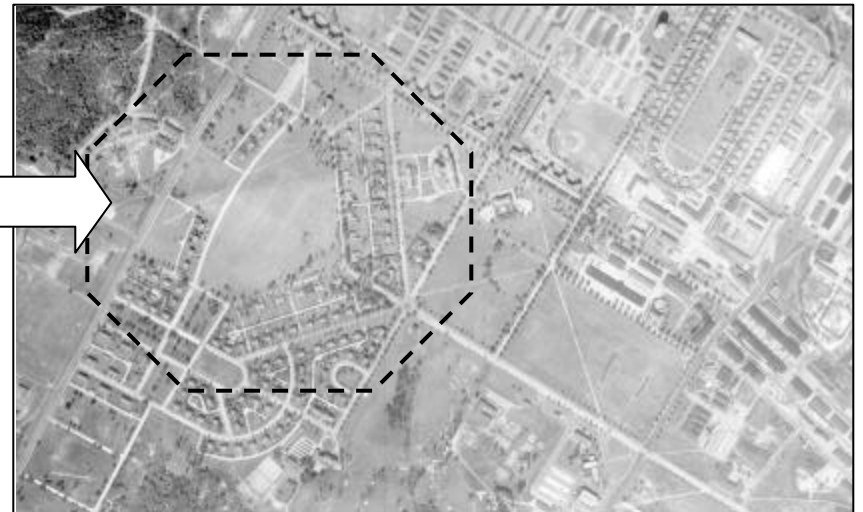
Randolph Street was the major axis connecting Fort Bragg externally to surrounding communities and internally to the officers' residential area and the administrative/labor area.

Macomb Street, another axis parallel and north of Randolph Street, became the administrative core of the post. Another open green space, a polo field/parade ground in the middle of the officer's residential area, became a vista to the Main Post Chapel which acts as terminus to the north end of the field.



Chevron

From the air, the layout resembles a chevron with the parade ground in the center.



1946 Aerial

Construction

Phase I

The first phase of permanent construction, which took place between 1927 and 1931, consisted of a number of three-story barracks, a three-story hospital, one and two-story Officers' housing, and one-story Non Commissioned Officers' housing. The architectural styles of Georgian Revival, Spanish Eclectic, Colonial Revival and Bungalow dominated this period of construction.



Barracks just after completion, ca. 1930s



*Non Commissioned Officers' housing
just after completion, ca. 1930s.*



Hospital on a 1930s Postcard

Architectural Styles

Georgian Revival & Neoclassical Revival

Georgian Revival and Neoclassical Revival identifies the northwest quadrant with monumental brick buildings with side-gable roofs pierced with dormer vents and windows, highly stylized entrance ways with stone door surrounds and multi-paned transoms and multi-paned windows.

The barracks, hospital, headquarters building, mule barns/horse stables, and other administrative buildings were built in this style.



Close-up of barrack roof

Transom



*Close-up of
barrack door*



Barrack as it looks today

Architectural Styles

Spanish Eclectic, Colonial Revival, and Bungalow

The southeast quadrant is identified by Spanish Eclectic elements combined with the Colonial Revival and Bungalow styles of architecture with tiled roofs, stucco walls, arched porches and paved patios.

All of the family housing for Officers and Non Commissioned Officers were built in this style along with the Officers' Club, and Bachelor Officers' Quarters.

These two different styles are linked together though the use of decorative rafter tails, terra-cotta roofs accented with copper gutters and downspouts.

Terra-cotta tiles



Arched Porch

Officers' Housing (Normandy Heights) as it looks today

Construction Part II

The second phase of construction occurred throughout the 1930s with the construction of the chapel, theatre, mule barns/horse stables, and additional housing. By the end of the 1930s, the main post area was complete.



Mule barns just after their completion ca. 1936



Barracks on a 1930s postcard

A majority of the buildings in the Old Post Historic District were built during the development of Fort Bragg as a permanent post from the late 1920s to the end of the 1930s.

World War II

Construction, 1941-1946

The architectural and engineering firm of J.N. Pease and Associates, of Charlotte, North Carolina supervised the planning and the construction of the expansion.

In just eleven months, the base had approximately 2,800 new wood-frame temporary buildings consisting of barracks, mess halls, day rooms, service clubs, field houses, chapels, warehouses, officers barracks, and the list goes on.



WW II Barracks located in the Old Division Area on Butner Road.



WWII Mess Hall located in the Old Division Area on Butner Road

World War II

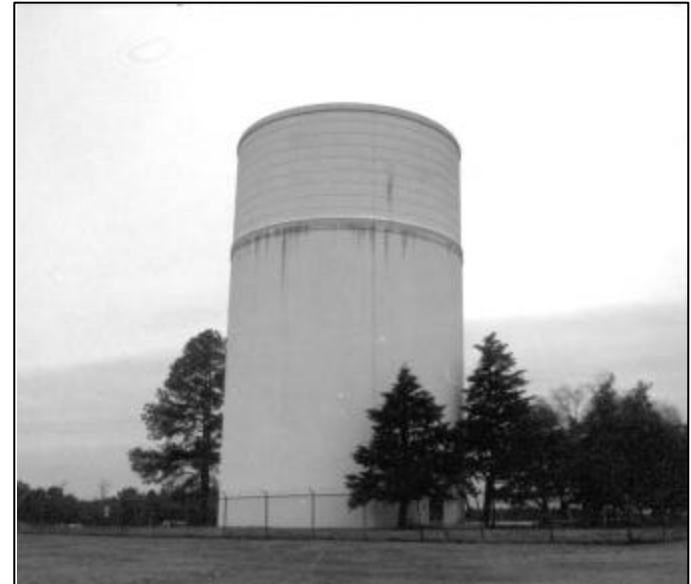
In the Main Post Area

The temporary WWII buildings filled in the open areas of main post area; however most of these buildings have since been demolished.

In the historic district, there were several permanent buildings built during WWII including the American Red Cross building, a water tower, warehouses, and other buildings. Also, some of the existing buildings were altered to better meet the needs of Fort Bragg. For example, the mule barns/horse stables were turned into warehouses or vehicle maintenance sheds.



American Red Cross Building as it appears today



Water Tower as it appears today

Buildings in the Old Post Historic District

The historic district can be divided into four areas:

1. **Macomb Street**, the administrative core of the district contains administrative buildings, the War Department Theatre, the original Headquarters, the old Hospital, and several other buildings
2. **Normandy Heights**, the Officer's housing area, contains Officers' family housing, the Officers' Club, Bachelor Officers' Quarters, and the Post Chapel. This area is located to the south of Macomb Street, bounded by Reilly Road, Macomb Street, Armistead Street, and Normandy Drive.
3. **Bastogne Gables**, the Non Commissioned Officers' (NCO) housing area, contains NCO family housing and the 1940 water tower. This area is located to the north of Macomb Street, bounded by Hamilton Street, Letterman Street, Sturgis Street and Humphrey Plaza.
4. **Mule Barn Area**, stable/mule barn area, contains the 1930s horse stables, mule barns, gun artillery sheds, and stable guard quarters. This area is located to the north of Macomb Street, bounded by Reilly Road, Letterman Street, Jackson Street and Woodruff Road.

Macomb Street

In the late 1920s/early 1930s, Macomb Street was the administrative core of Fort Bragg and remains so today. Located on Macomb Street were the Post Headquarters, Post Hospital, Guard House, Telephone Exchange, and the War Department Theatre. Several other administrative buildings were located on side streets. Along with the administrative buildings, Macomb Street contained eight barracks for enlisted men.

Buildings in Macomb Street Area:

Post Headquarters
Field Artillery Board Headquarters
Post Hospital
Nurse's Quarters
Barracks
Commissary
Bakery
Train Depot
War Department Theatre
American Red Cross Building



Macomb Street as it appears today

Headquarter Buildings

(Post HQ & Field Artillery Board HQ)

The old Post Headquarters is located on the southwest corner of Macomb and Armistead Streets and the old Field Artillery Board Headquarters is located on the north side of Scott Street one block south of Macomb Street.

Both the headquarters buildings are brick, Neoclassical Revival style buildings with decorative stone entrances.



Postcard depicting Post Headquarters ca. 1930s

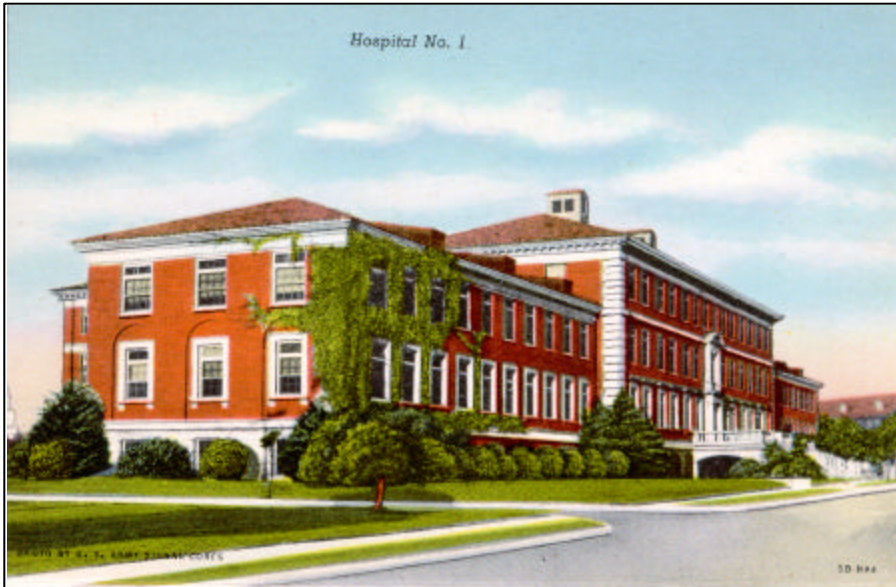


Postcard depicting Field Artillery Board Headquarters ca. 1930s

Post Hospital

(Southwest corner of Macomb & Armistead Streets)

The old Post Hospital is located at the corner of Macomb and Armistead Streets. Today, the building serves as the XXIII Airborne Corps headquarters. The hospital was constructed in 1931. The building is a large tripartite three-story brick building with a monumental stone entrance and decorative window trim. The rear of the building originally had open porches.



Postcard depicting the Post Hospital in the 1940s.



Post Hospital entrance today as the headquarters of the XVIII Airborne Corps.

Nurse's Quarters

(East side of Dyer Street)

The Nurse's Quarters are located behind the old Post Hospital on the east side of Dyer Street. The building is a two-story, stuccoed, Spanish Eclectic-style building built the same year as the hospital in 1931. Today the Nurse's Quarters houses administrative offices.

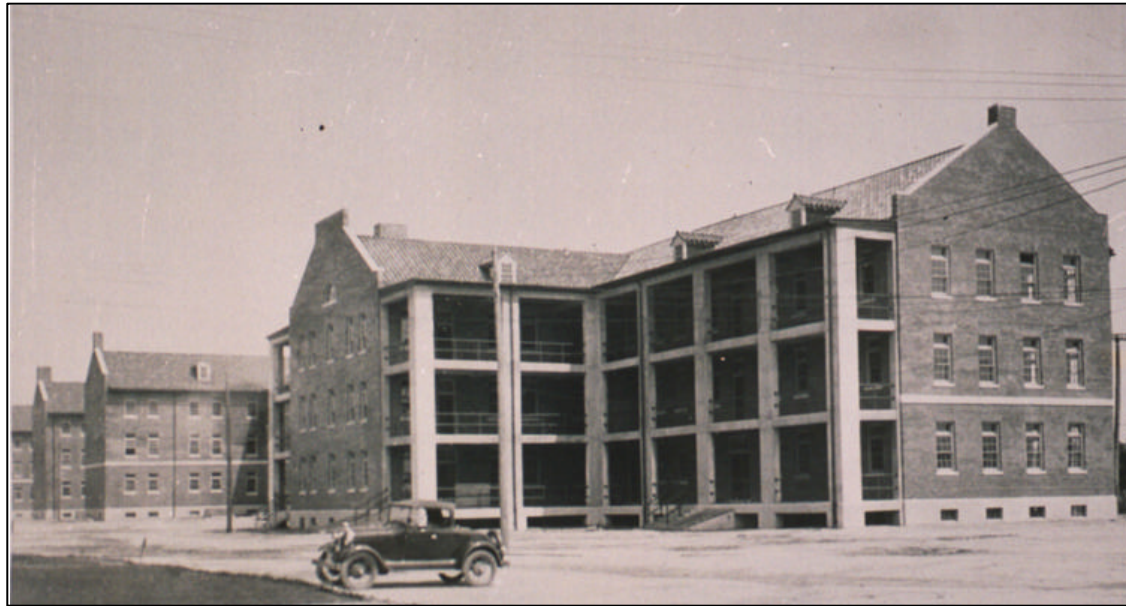


Nurse's Quarters as it appears today

Barracks

(North side Macomb Street)

There are five barracks on Macomb Street, two on Armistead Street, and one on Hamilton Street – 8 in total. All the barracks were constructed for enlisted soldiers between 1927 and 1939. The barracks are three stories with a basement. The first floor originally contained kitchens, mess halls, and a few offices. The second and third floors also contained offices but primarily contained the sleeping quarters. The rooms were open bay with rows of beds for the enlisted men and individual rooms for the NCOs. The rear of the building had open porches.



Rear of the Barracks on Macomb Street, 1930s

Barracks



ca. 1930s Front of Barracks on Macomb Street

Today, the barracks are used mostly for administrative offices.



Barracks as they appear today.

Commissary and Bakery

(North side of Macomb Street)

The commissary and bakery comprised the main shopping complex of the Post. The buildings are now used for administrative offices.

The buildings were constructed in 1934 and are both brick. The commissary maintains original windows, doors and transoms while the bakery retains its original parapet end walls and Craftsman-style entrance stoops.



Commissary as it appears today



Bakery as it appears today

Train Depot

(East side of Knox Street near Macomb Street)

The Train Depot is located near the corner of Knox Street and Macomb Street. The depot was constructed by the Cape Fear Railroad in 1943 (check or was it the Atlantic Coast Line RR?). The building is a two-story Spanish Colonial Revival-style building with a loading dock on the one side.

The building was damaged by a fire in 2001 but has since been restored and now houses the XVIII Airborne Corps Historians office.



Train Depot as it appears today

War Department Theatre

(South side of Macomb Street)

The War Department Theatre is located on the corner of Macomb Street and Reilly Road. The building was built in 1934 in the Neoclassical Revival style. The theatre provided entertainment for the soldiers. Today the theatre is used for meetings and other gatherings.



1939 Photograph of the Theatre



Theatre as it appears today

American Red Cross Building

(South side of Macomb Street)

The American Red Cross Building is located on the southwest corner of Macomb and Armistead Streets. The building was constructed in 1942 and is one of the permanent buildings built during World War II in the historic district. The building is Georgian Revival with a tripartite form and a front portico.



Front portico of the American Red Cross Building as it appears today.

Normandy Heights

In the late 1920s to the 1930s, Normandy Heights served as the Officers' housing area. The neighborhood was arranged with geometric streets with the parade ground in the middle. In addition to family housing, the area contained the Bachelor Officers' Quarters, Officers' Club, and the Post Chapel. Today, Normandy Heights retains its original function and continues to be the Officer's housing area.

Buildings in Normandy Heights

Officers' family housing
Bachelor Officers' Quarters
Officers' Club
Post Chapel



1930s postcard of Normandy Heights

Officers' Family Housing

For family housing, there are three different floor plans constructed in this area: one-story ranch-style house, two-story single-family house, and two-story duplex. All of the buildings were built in the Colonial Revival style with stucco walls and terra cotta tiled roofs.



Two-story family housing in Normandy Heights on a 1930s postcard

Ranch-style House

The ranch-style house was the first type constructed in 1928, but the style proved to be inefficient in terms of cost and space so the Army switched to the two-story floor plans.

There are 12 ranch-style homes located on Hunt and Alexander Streets. The house consists of a central side-gabled core flanked by front-gabled sections that enclose a paved patio with a one-bay garage wing projecting from the rear elevation.



Ranch-style house as it appears today

Two-Story Single-Family House

The two-story single-family house makes up the majority of the houses in the neighborhood, built from 1928 to 1934.

There are 84 two-story, single-family houses located on the south side of the neighborhood and around the parade ground. The stuccoed houses consist of two stories with an arched entrance porch and a two-story sunporch wing. A majority of these homes have detached garages located in the alleys, but some of the homes have attached garages that take up a section of the basement level.



Two-story single-family house as it appears today

Two-story Duplex

The two-story duplexes are the third type of housing built in 1939.

There are nine duplexes located on Dupont Plaza and Donelson Street. The duplexes have a hipped roof with a single-story sunporch wing. There are two distinct door surrounds that further distinguish the duplexes. These homes have detached garages located in the rear alleys.



Two-story duplex as it appears today

Bachelor Officers' Quarters

(North side of Totten Street)

The Bachelor Officers' Quarters (BOQ) is located on the corner of Totten and Armistead Streets across the street from the Officers' Club. The BOQ is two stories and spans the length of the block. The building was constructed in 1935 in the Spanish Eclectic style to match the neighborhood. The BOQ contained suites for twenty officers. Across the street was the garage for the BOQ containing twenty-car bays also built in 1935 in the Spanish Eclectic style. Today, the BOQ is the Normandy House, where guests stay when visiting Fort Bragg, and the BOQ garage has been converted to offices.



Bachelor Officers' Quarters just after it was completed in 1935



Bachelor Officers' Quarters as it appears today

Officers' Club

(South side of Totten Street)

The Officers' Club is located at the corner of Totten and Armistead Street. The building was constructed in 1939 in the Spanish Eclectic style. The club building has a two-story gabled main structure with a three-story tower. Over time, additions have been made to the building, but the original form is visible and it retains its original function as the Officers' Club.



Officers' Club as it appears today



Officers' Club on a 1930s postcard

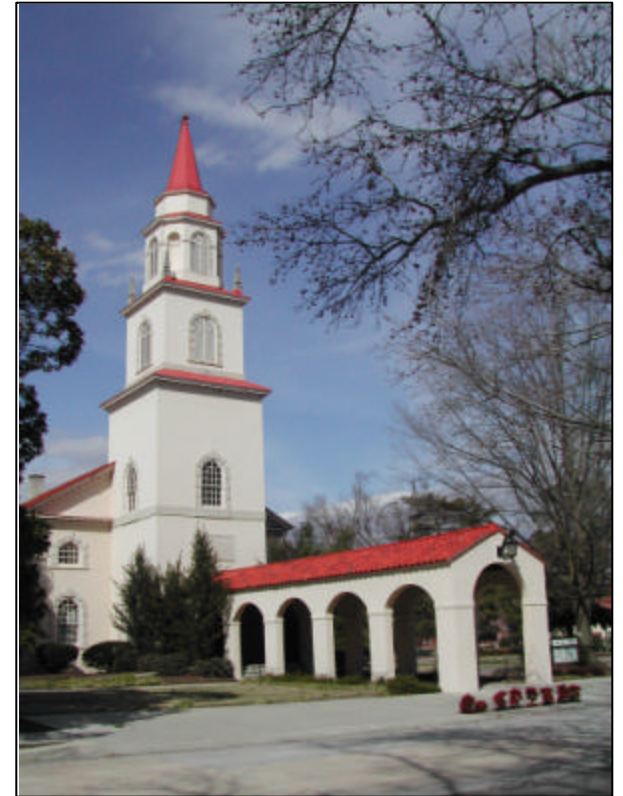
Post Chapel

(North side of Sedwick Street)

The Post Chapel serves as a focal point for the neighborhood as it is located at the north end of the parade ground and is visible from all points of Normandy Heights. The Atlanta architectural firm, Hentz, Adler and Schutze designed the Neoclassical Revival-style chapel. The building was constructed in 1934 as part of the Works Progress Administration (a 1930s depression-era jobs program). The front entrance arcade was added on in the 1960s. Today, the Post Chapel continues to serve the soldiers and family members of Fort Bragg.



Interior of the Post Chapel in the 1940s as shown on a postcard



Post Chapel as it appears today.

Bastogne Gables

From 1928 to 1939, the neighborhood of Bastogne Gables was created. The neighborhood consisted of 96 bungalows built as family housing for Non Commissioned Officers (NCOs). The houses are arranged symmetrically around a central, rectangular park. Bastogne Gables continues to operate as a Non Commissioned Officers' housing area today.

The houses are all one-story with front sitting porches creating an attractive streetscape. The houses have detached garages located in side alleys. There are four types of porches:

- I. Front-gable porch covered with weatherboard (wood siding) with stuccoed porch posts;
- II. Front-gable porch with stuccoed porch and posts;
- III. Hipped porch with wooden posts (all of these are along Letterman Street and were the first homes built in 1928);
- IV. Hipped porch with stuccoed arcade-type porch.

NCO Family Housing

Type I and II



Type I as it appears today



Type II as it appears today

NCO Family Housing

Type III and IV



Type IV as it appears today

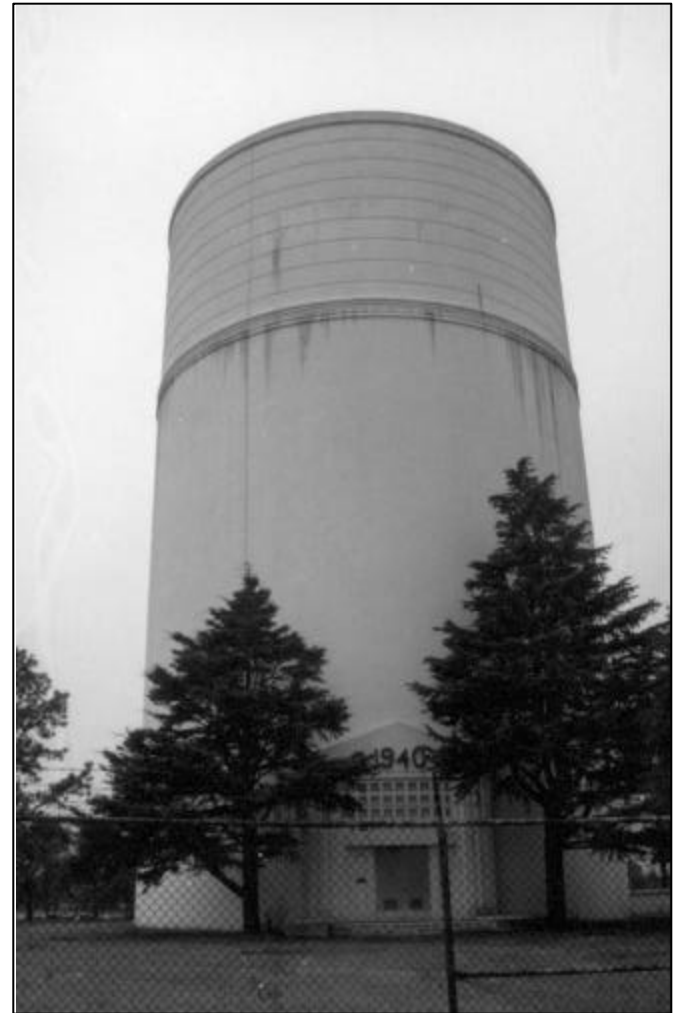


Type III as it appears today

Water Tower

(West side of Hamilton Street)

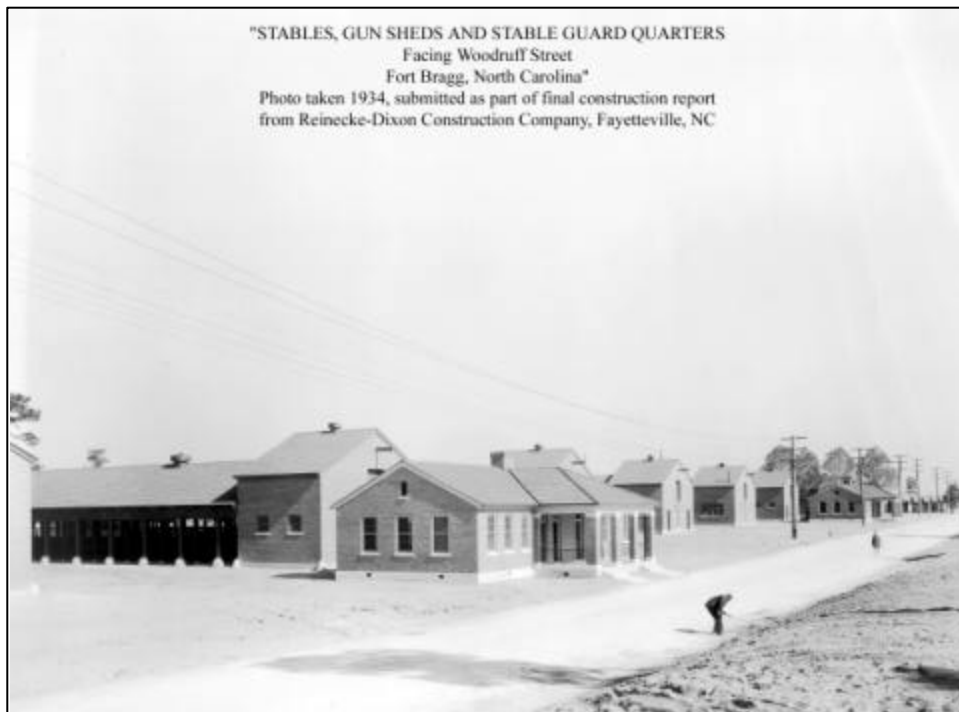
In addition to the NCO family housing, Bastogne Gables contains a 1940 water tower at the corner of Hamilton and Rogers Streets. The Moderne-style tower was designed by J.N. Pease & Company of Charlotte, North Carolina and built by Macdonald Engineering Company of Chicago, Illinois.



Water Tower as it appears today

Mule Barn Area

In the 1930s, this area contained mule barns, stables, gun artillery sheds, and stable guard quarters. When Fort Bragg was a field artillery training center, animals, such as horses and mules, were used to help transport the equipment. In the 1940s, majority of the mule barns, stables and sheds were converted into motor repair shops to support the World War II mobilization effort. Today, the buildings in this area have been converted into administrative offices, shops or warehouses.



"STABLES, GUN SHEDS AND STABLE GUARD QUARTERS
Facing Woodruff Street
Fort Bragg, North Carolina"
Photo taken 1934, submitted as part of final construction report
from Reinecke-Dixon Construction Company, Fayetteville, NC

Buildings in the Mule Barn Area:

Mule Barns/Stables
Gun Artillery Sheds
Stable Guard Quarters

1934 photo of the Mule Barn Area

Mule Barns, Stables & Gun Artillery Sheds

These buildings were all constructed in 1935 and are similar in design. They are arranged in rows within the block bounded by Reilly, Woodruff, Letterman, and Hamilton.

The buildings are steel frame. The front section of the buildings are brick two stories with a wide opening on the top story which originally had a hayrick above it for the easy loading of hay into the upper story.



Mule Barn Area after completion ca. 1935

Stable Guard Quarters

(North side of Woodruff Street)

There are two stable guard quarters located on the north side of Woodruff Street in front of the mule barns. The buildings were constructed in 1935. The stable guard quarters are brick one-story buildings. Each quarter originally housed ten guards.



Stable Guard Quarter as it appears today

Every Building Tells a Story

The buildings in the Old Post Historic District have witnessed many events in Fort Bragg's history from its beginnings as Camp Bragg in 1918 to the creation of a permanent post in the 1920s/1930s and lastly, to its expansion in the 1940s. The buildings both individually and as a group help us to understand the important role Fort Bragg has played in the defense of our nation over the last century.



Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Program

XVIII Airborne Corps & Fort Bragg

ATTN: AFZA-DPW-E

Fort Bragg, NC 28310

910-396-6680

www.bragg.army.mil/culturalresources

Managing the Past for the Future

